



## **The impact of anti-radicalisation policies on safeguarding practices for children, young people and parents – 28 January 2020**

Our seminar sought to explore the relationship between the aims of Prevent and child safeguarding practice; a key question is the suggestion of racial bias implicit in the aims and methods of the policy that affects institutions - in health, education and social care - interacting with and responsible for children.

This was the fifth in a series of seminars supported by the BME-Migrant Advisory Group for safeguarding children and young people (B-MAG) and partners UEL Centre for Social Work Research (CSWR) and The Victoria Climbié Foundation UK (VCF). Professor Stephen Briggs introduced Dr Tarek Younis, <https://www.tarekyounis.org/>, a cultural and critical clinical psychologist, and currently a Lecturer in Psychology at Middlesex University. His research has explored the racialisation of Muslims as a result of statutory counter-terrorism policies in mental health. The seminar heard from Dr Tarek Younis and discussant Nick Watts, co-Founder of Together with Migrant Children, followed by an open discussion.

Dr Younis focussed on his research on Islamophobia in the National Health Service (NHS), how Prevent's counter-radicalisation enters into clinical logic. He aimed to demonstrate how Prevent must engage in performance colour blindness, the active recognition and dismissal of racial logic which associates radicalised Muslims with the threat of terrorism. He outlined the impacts that racialised and moralised policies as exemplified by Prevent have on NHS staff, especially British Muslims. He concluded with a discussion of how institutional racism is introduced and operates in the NHS, why it is difficult to address racism embedded within colour blind policies, and how mental health and psychologisation are integral to the performance of colour blindness.

Dr Younis' stimulating presentation facilitated inclusive and active discussions on a wide range of issues associated with counter-radicalisation and safeguarding, including how Prevent exists in the pre-criminal space and the related issue of coercion. More widely, during open discussion, transparency issues with Prevent were raised as a concern, as well as issues of statistical recording and resultant processes. A feature of the discussion was the engagement of practitioners in the audience with the issues raised by Dr Younis, which led to a discussion of the tensions experienced by practitioners in their roles, on the one hand, aiming to protect the public from acts of terrorism and on the other hand to support, promote and safeguard individual well-being.

Discussant, Nick Watts provided a summary of practice-based issues, highlighting that the number 1 referrer into Prevent is the education setting, and questions as to why no serious case review has ever been conducted in relation to what happened in the Shamima Begum case.

Dr Mor Dioum, VCF Co-Founder and Director, concluded discussions by reminding us that the Prevent agenda is not rooted in the realm of safeguarding but that of politics. For those children and families involved we must continue to offer advice and support regarding possible outcomes when declining voluntary engagement, and to work to build resilience within the process.

For additional information about our work to safeguard children and young people at BME-Migrant Advisory Group (B-MAG) do visit us at <https://bmagsafeguardingcyp.com>